



Top 5 spots to enjoy the Aruban sunset



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Raisin moonshine banned in Iran enjoys resurgence in New York

New York, United States

Three Iranian men pressed rehydrated raisins at an artisan distillery just outside New York, thousands of miles from their war-struck homeland.

They were carefully producing aragh sagi, a traditional spirit banned by the clerical authorities along with all alcohol following the 1979 Islamic revolution. Despite its outlaw moonshine status, the drink is still made clandestinely and consumed inside Iran.

"Everybody's drinking, but we just don't want to get caught," said Siavash Karampour, formerly a fixture on Tehran's rock music scene and now the co-manager of a bar in Brooklyn.

Together with three childhood friends who, like him, came to New York to rebuild their lives, they decided to brew the Iranian firewater in the United States.

They say they wanted to offer others like them a taste of home as well as "something that has been behind the curtain."

Branded as "SAG," their aragh sagi like a stronger Italian grappa is made in the still of David Nahmias, a distiller born into a Mo-



A bartender prepares a cocktail using the traditional Iranian spirit "Aragh Sagi" produced in Yonkers, at a restaurant in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, on April 28, 2026.

roccan Jewish family who makes mahia, a traditional dried fig-based spirit from his homeland.

"They came to me through word of mouth. Their alcohol uses the same process as arak, which you find in Syria or Lebanon -- but without the anise. It wasn't complicated for me... And I liked them!" Nahmias said. The creators of SAG, aged between 35 and 41, settled in New York several years ago and remain active in the local Iranian diaspora and all have day jobs.

They were the first to bring aragh sagi to the U.S. market, although a handful of brands exist in Europe.

- 'I feel privileged' -

The company's output of 7,000 bottles a year sold for \$50 a pop in around 30 liquor stores and available in as many bars remains modest.

But bars have latched on to their creation as a way to promote new cocktails. "We just started this back in the day, as a hobby... we kind of want to grow or-

ganically," said brew group member Sasan Oskoue, a visual artist.

The entrepreneurs see their venture as a project that goes beyond a simple spirit, representing an emotional and cultural gesture.

"So many Iranian artists and filmmakers have highlighted some parts of Iran that haven't been seen before, and in making this, we are kind of doing the same thing," said Karampour.

Since they launched SAG two years ago, many artistic projects have emerged

to complement the brand, with parties in New York and DJ sets performed by Iranian musicians.

Their connection to Iran through friends and family is constant, making the ongoing conflict between Tehran and their host nation all the more painful.

"It's really tough to be seeing all these images, and then you still have to go to work and live your daily life... You technically live in two countries," said Karampour.

With the help of large handheld food mixers, they carefully grind the mixture of dried Californian grapes and water, which they then ferment before distilling it in a large still imported from Germany.

Amir Imani, a computer engineer, says New York was the ideal place to establish their brand, a city that is both very diverse and tolerant, and where their business is not written off as "exotic."

"Being in New York helps, because I can see people are not supportive of what is happening in this administration either the war or like Immigration and Customs Enforcement and all of that," Imani said. □

More Americans going hungry than in pandemic: New York Fed

Washington, United States
More Americans are suffering from hunger this year than during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York said Wednesday.

A survey asked around 1,200 US household heads in February whether they had to dip into savings or emergency accounts to cover expenses, struggled to find enough food, had children who missed meals, or received food donations or government aid to buy food.

"There have been meaningful increases in the shares of households reporting that they'd experienced the four situations described above," the

New York Fed said.

"We find a remarkable increase in food insecurity, particularly among lower-educated and lower-income households and households with young chil-

dren."

The survey was conducted before the Iran war, which has hiked the price of groceries in the United States to their highest rate since 2023.



Mo Rocca, Emcee speaks on stage during Action Against Hunger Annual Gala on October 17, 2024 in New York City.

More than one third of households told the Fed that they had dipped into savings to get by, up from 21.8 percent in June 2020.

That month, the number of Americans receiving unemployment benefits peaked at more than 33 million at the height of Covid-19 shutdowns.

The pandemic rattled the global economy and sent shoppers scrambling to empty store shelves, prompting surges in product prices across the board. Ten percent of households in this year's survey said they did not have enough food or had children missing meals, compared with four percent in June 2020.

More than 15 percent said

they had received food donations, up from 10.6 percent.

The New York Fed said that consumers were "pessimistic about their own financial circumstances and outlook."

"Current levels of consumer sentiment... have fallen near or below the low levels seen during the Great Recession and pandemic," it added.

"While many households are doing fine and economic activity overall has been expanding at a solid pace, large segments of the population are facing high levels of economic insecurity and financial strain, and consumer sentiment on the whole has dropped to low levels." □

How an ancient seed is solving America's modern water crisis

As the sun rises over the municipal water treatment facility in Scottsdale, Arizona, a quiet revolution is brewing in the settling tanks. There are no heavy chemical scents or loud industrial scrubbers. Instead, there is the faint, earthy aroma of crushed seeds. These seeds belong to the *Moringa oleifera*, a plant native to the foothills of the Himalayas, now being hailed as a "miracle tree" that could fundamentally change how the United States secures its clean water future. For decades, American water infrastructure has relied on synthetic coagulants like aluminum sulfate to clarify drinking water. While effective, these chemicals leave behind a sludge that is difficult to dispose of and have raised long-term health concerns. Enter the *Moringa* tree. This week, a landmark study published by a coalition of researchers from the University of Arizona and MIT has confirmed that the proteins found in *Moringa* seeds are not just a "natural alternative"—they are arguably superior.

The study, which concluded a three-year pilot program, revealed that crushed *Moringa* seeds can remove up to 98% of



Moringa Tree

microplastics and 95% of harmful bacteria from raw water. For a nation currently grappling with the "forever chemical" crisis of PFAS and the pervasive spread of microplastics in the Great Lakes and Western reservoirs, the discovery feels like a gift from the natural world.

"We have been looking for a 'silver bullet' for microplastic filtration for a decade," says Dr. Elena Rodriguez, the lead environmental engineer on the project. "We found it in a tree that grows in sandy

soil and requires almost no water. The protein in these seeds acts like a molecular magnet. It binds to pollutants, heavy metals, and plastic fibers, causing them to clump together and sink to the bottom. What's left is water that is nearly surgical-grade in its purity."

The implications for rural America are particularly profound. In many Appalachian and Southern communities, aging infrastructure and the high cost of chemical treatments have left residents with substandard tap water. Be-

cause *Moringa* trees can be grown in various U.S. climates from the humid South to the arid Southwest the "Miracle Tree" offers a decentralized, low-cost solution. In the small town of Crystal Springs, Mississippi, mayor Thomas Arrington is already looking at how to integrate *Moringa* filtration into the local grid. "Our current budget is squeezed by the rising cost of imported chemicals," Arrington notes. "If we can grow our own filtration system in a greenhouse or a local grove, we aren't just cleaning our water; we're cre-

ating a local industry. It's about self-reliance."

The motivational aspect of this breakthrough extends beyond the laboratory. The *Moringa* tree has long been a symbol of resilience in global health circles. Its leaves are packed with more protein than eggs and more vitamin C than oranges, earning it the nickname "The Tree of Life" in parts of Africa and Asia. Seeing this ancient wisdom applied to high-tech American environmental challenges represents a shift in how modern science views traditional knowledge.

However, the path to nationwide adoption isn't without hurdles. Federal regulations from the EPA require rigorous testing before organic coagulants can replace traditional methods on a mass scale. There is also the logistical challenge of scaling up seed production to meet the demands of cities like Chicago or Los Angeles. Yet, the momentum is undeniable. Private startups in Silicon Valley are already vying for patents on *Moringa*-based "bio-filters" for home use, and non-profits are distributing seeds to community gardens in "water-stressed" ZIP codes.

U.S. bans drones over World Cup matches and events

Washington, United States Drone flights will be banned over U.S. stadiums hosting World Cup matches as well as over fan events related to the tournament that kicks off June 11, authorities said Thursday. On match days, unless specifically authorized, all aircraft including drones will be prohibited from flying within three nautical miles (5.6 kilometers) of stadiums and up to 3,000 feet (900 meters) above ground level, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. The no-fly zones around fan events put on by host cities at stadiums and other locations extend to

a radius of one nautical mile and up to 1,000 feet above ground. "As fans from around the world gather at stadiums and fan events across the country for the FIFA World Cup, the FAA is using every available tool to protect the airspace, including stronger drone-enforcement efforts," said FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford. Violators could face fines up to \$100,000, confiscation of equipment and federal criminal charges, the statement said. The Federal Bureau of Investigation confirmed that it would get involved "to ensure that we have a safe sky," Aaron Hope of

the FBI's Atlanta office told a press conference in the southern city. "Our primary focus is that the message gets out that it is a no-drone zone," Hope said. "Should there be the need for us to intercept a drone we have the technology for that. We do have the technology to identify drones and then locate operators, it is something we will be doing if we need to." DETER, a new enforcement initiative that enables rapid detection of drone violations, will be used at the World Cup to support "enhanced enforcement," the FAA said. The world's premier soc-

cer extravaganza is being co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Can-

ada from June 11 until the July 19 final.



An aerial image shows Los Angeles Stadium, temporarily renamed from SoFi Stadium, and the KIA Forum (Rear) ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Inglewood, California, on May 27, 2026.

'Immense' leverage: why AI chip workers are demanding more

Tokyo, Japan

Runaway profits and sky-high valuations for micro-chip companies have fuelled worker demands over pay packages in South Korea, raising the question: who profits from the artificial intelligence boom? In the United States, some employees with stock options have made it rich and retired early, while in Asia chip engineers are now using their "immense" leverage over companies to get their way, analysts say.

After memory chip giant Samsung Electronics reached a deal with its biggest union over bonuses, averting a major strike, AFP looks at what the dispute might mean for the industry.

- Why are chipmakers suddenly so flush? -

Rapid advances in AI systems since text generator ChatGPT's 2022 breakthrough have sparked a gold rush for tech companies.

Massive demand for the silicon components used in AI data centres especially memory chips, which are in short supply has sent revenues soaring for firms that design, produce and assemble them.



Commuters walk in front of the Samsung Electronics factory in Pyeongtaek on May 28, 2026.

Samsung's value topped \$1 trillion this month, followed by Korean rival SK hynix and US chipmaker Micron newcomers to a previously exclusive club of around a dozen companies, nearly all American.

"An unprecedented wave of insatiable demand" for advanced memory chips has made SK hynix and its peers "an indispensable backbone of the global AI infrastructure build-out", William Keating, head of semiconductor research

firm Ingenuity, told AFP.

- Do workers see the benefits? -

In the United States, employees often get stock options, a form of so-called "golden handcuffs" allowing workers to profit from share price gains over a set period of time.

Asia's huge chip sector "is more dominated by labour unions", Neil Shah, co-founder of Counterpoint Research, told AFP.

With Taiwan and South Ko-

rea home to most of the world's chipmaking talent pool, engineers there hold "immense" leverage, Shah said.

"This skilled labour force know they are indispensable, they are contributing to these larger margins," he added.

Under the union deal, around 60 percent of Samsung's domestic workforce is eligible to receive a bonus of roughly \$370,000 this year, based on a market estimate of operating prof-

it.

Workers at SK hynix received bonuses more than three times larger than those paid by Samsung last year, according to Samsung's union.

- Will the Samsung deal inspire others? -

A Samsung strike "would almost certainly have been the biggest work stoppage in the history of the global semiconductor industry", South Korean writer and researcher Kap Seol said in an article for US magazine Jacobin.

In the chip world, "high pay and generous benefits often foster a sense of privilege and prestige" among workers, "despite their experience of chemically drenched working conditions, cutthroat competition, and long, risky working hours," he wrote.

There have also been reports of discontent over bonuses at Taiwan's chip production giant TSMC, where AI demand has brought record profits.

"As the company continues to grow, we are highly confident that the full-year growth percentage of our employee profit-sharing... will surpass that of last year," TSMC said in a statement. □

AI giant Anthropic reaches near-trillion dollar valuation

San Francisco, United States

Artificial intelligence company Anthropic said Thursday it had raised \$65 billion in a new funding round that values the Claude maker at \$965 billion, more than its archrival OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT.

The latest fundraising round confirms Anthropic's place as one of the most significant players in AI, with the startup led by Dario Amodei having drawn fans for its coding powers and state-of-the-art models.

Anthropic's rise came by doubling down on delivering generative AI to enterprise clients rather than general users, the path initially chosen by archrival OpenAI.

Founded by former OpenAI employees, including

CEO Amodei, Anthropic has a special focus on AI safety even as it rushes out new products in order to remain in the AI race.

"This funding will help us serve the historic demand

we are experiencing, stay at the research frontier, and bring Claude to more of the places where work happens," said Krishna Rao, Anthropic's chief financial officer.

Anthropic's near-trillion-

dollar valuation puts it ahead of OpenAI, which was valued at \$852 billion in March. Both companies could go public as early as this year.

Ahead of them, Elon Musk's SpaceX, which absorbed his AI company, xAI, in February, could see shares begin trading as early as June 12, targeting a valuation of approximately \$1.75 trillion in what would be the largest IPO in history.

Anthropic's round was led by major Silicon Valley venture capitalists Altimeter Capital, Dragoneer, Greenoaks and Sequoia Capital.

It also included \$15 billion in previously committed investments from cloud giants, including \$5 billion

from Amazon.

Semiconductor firms Micron, Samsung and SK hynix -- whose products are crucial to the technology also participated as strategic infrastructure partners. The company said Claude is now the first frontier AI model available across all three of the world's largest cloud platforms Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud and Microsoft Azure. The funding comes as Anthropic navigates a high-profile legal dispute with the Pentagon, having sued the Defense Department after it designated the company a supply chain risk a move Anthropic called unconstitutional retaliation for its refusal to grant the military unfettered access to its AI models. □



This photograph shows a smartphone displaying the logo of the US artificial intelligence safety and research company Anthropic, in Mulhouse on April 21, 2026.



This photograph taken on May 20, 2026, shows mountaineers climbing a slope lined up during their ascent to summit Mount Everest in Nepal.

Nepal's record-breaking Everest season nears end

Kathmandu, Nepa

Nepal is eyeing a record-breaking Everest season with more climbers expected to reach the top than ever before, officials said Wednesday, as the climbing window nears its end. More than 950 climbers have reached the top of the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak this season, said Nepali government official Khim Lal Gautam, speaking at a mountaineering conference in Kathmandu. "It is truly historic," Gautam, a mountaineer himself who was assigned by the tourism ministry to help oversee expeditions from base camp, told AFP.

"By Thursday, the number (of climbers) can surpass 1,000", he said.

The season began with fears of delay after a serac -- a block of glacial ice -- blocked the way, but Nepali climbers have established an alternative route. The world's highest peak, which straddles the Nepal-China border, can be scaled from either Nepal or the northern face in Tibet. But China closed its route this year.

The Guinness World Records says the most ascents of Everest in a single season was 872, achieved in 2019. Nepal issued a record 494 Everest permits for foreigners this season, with a city

of tents up at the foot of the mountain for climbers and support staff.

- 'Come together' -

Climbers and officials said that a wide summit window a period of stable weather that allows safe attempts contributed to a surge of successful ascents.

On Thursday alone, an estimated 275 climbers reached the summit, marking the busiest single day on the southern side.

The climbing season is will end within a few days.

After that, the final number of those who summited will be tallied after the climbs are verified, which require photographs and statements from the climber's expedition company and guides.

Five people have died this season -- two Indians and three Nepali climbers involved in Everest preparations.

That compares to the 18 people who died in 2023, the deadliest season on the mountain.

"There have been some deaths," said British climber Kenton Cool, who broke his own record of most summits by a non-Nepali with his 20th climb.

"But I think this year really shows that teams can come together to open the route to Everest, de-

spite the delay, and we still get a pretty good season," Cool told reporters.

"And I think that should be celebrated."

- Overcrowding, climate concerns -

The large numbers have rekindled concerns about overcrowding on the mountain, particularly in the low-oxygen "death zone" near the summit.

Climbers waiting to summit were seen in photographs standing in line on the icy heights.

But guides said that improved logistics and technology including access to the internet made climbing safer.

"Climbing has now become more comfortable... up to Everest Camp II, we can check the weather conditions before ascending," said Everest guide Dorchi Sherpa, 30.

"The main cause of accidents is weather it is the primary risk factor."

Lukas Furtenbach, of Austria-based Furtenbach Adventures, said that warmer temperatures have also helped.

"Summit days were warm, and that helped to keep the number of frostbites low, because otherwise long traffic jams could have been deadly," Furtenbach said. □



Restorer Gianluca Galli works on the mosaic of the bull during the restoration in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, downtown Milan, on May 28, 2026.

Milan restores bull mosaic's testicles to former glory

Milan, Italy

Worn down by thousands of passersby honouring an unusual tradition, a floor mosaic of an anatomically detailed bull in one of Milan's grand arcades is getting a sensitive makeover.

Legend has it that grinding one's heel on the mosaic bull's testicles at the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II guarantees a return one day to the city.

"Because of constant pirouettes on the heel made by tourists visiting Milan, the pink tesserae that make up its testicles have been worn down, forming a small crater," city authorities said in a statement.

The beige bull mosaic representing Turin, the then-capital of Italy is part of the flooring in the 19th century shopping arcade near Milan's famous Duomo cathedral. Restorer Gianluca Galli was called in to repair the mosaic.

On Thursday, he could be seen in the gallery, kneeling down as tourists milled around and gawked at the windows of the original Prada store.

"It's probably a charming gesture, but also quite damaging for a work of art," Galli told AFP of the curious tradition.

The restorer cut new pieces of stone by hand after looking at designs from the period and taking an impression of the original bits.

He said he would use epoxy resins rather than the original lime and sand mortar to glue them down to better withstand tourists' heels.

Unable to pirouette on the bull during the restoration, tourists on Thursday could be seen performing a similar act on a neighbouring she-wolf mosaic representing Rome.

The bull's last restoration dates back to 2017.

"The gallery's lucky spot has become worn out over time," Emmanuel Conte and Marco Granelli, two Milan deputy mayors, said in the statement.

The time had come "to restore the gallery's mosaic to its original appearance," they said.

"The gallery is a living heritage site, which can wear out precisely because it is loved and frequented."

Galli said he was proud of his work and would like to "encourage young people to take up this profession, because Italy is very much in need of male and female restorers. "I know it's a demanding job, because you have to travel from site to site... but it is also a job regarded in Italy as a privilege," the craftsman said. □

Chief Megaron: heir to the fight for Brazil's Amazon

Pykany, Brazil

On a hot afternoon deep in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, Indigenous chief Megaron soaps himself and enjoys a quick swim in the river, a brief respite from battling threats to his people's lands.

The 75-year-old, with long white hair and sharp black geometric lines painted across his body, is stepping into a role he has long prepared for: succeeding his uncle, Brazil's most iconic Indigenous leader, Raoni Metuktire.

Chief Raoni, 93, who has devoted his life to warning the world about the destruction of the Amazon, has been hospitalized several times in recent weeks. Megaron Txucarramae vowed to carry forward his uncle's fight at a gathering of Kayapo leaders in the village of Pykany in Para state last week. They had come to see Raoni before he became too ill to attend.

"I told them that I will continue to support the struggle of our uncle to preserve not only Indigenous lands and the forest, but also to preserve our health, our culture, and our language," Megaron told AFP on the riverbank.

The Kayapo are one of hundreds of Indigenous groups in Brazil, but their fight to defend their land has become one of the most visible internationally.

Pykany lies in one of several Kayapo territories which together form one of the largest blocks of protected



Brazilian Indigenous chief Megaron Txucarramae, of the Kayapo ethnic group, speaks during an interview with AFP by the Xixe River in the village of Pykany, in Menkragnoti Indigenous Territory, southwest of Para State, Brazil, on May 21, 2026.

rainforest in the world -- an area larger than Portugal which they have thanks to the struggle of leaders like Raoni and Megaron.

Experts see Indigenous territories as one of the best barriers to climate change by preventing deforestation, as the Amazon edges closer to a tipping point in which it could transition to a drier, savannah-like ecosystem.

- Invasions and protest -

Megaron, like Raoni, is one of the last of a generation born before sustained contact with the outside world. He was born in 1950 in the village of Piraçu in the north of the state of Mato Grosso and lived through the "truly awful" violence of

incursions into Indigenous lands by settlers, ranchers and miners.

"I saw it with my own eyes. A thug hired by ranchers killed two of my uncles right in front of me, when I was just a child," he told AFP. He was by Raoni's side in the 80s leading major protests against the construction of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam on the Xingu River. The dam, one of the biggest in the world, was eventually built and inaugurated in 2016.

In 2010, the outspoken chief slammed President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva then in his second term as the "number one enemy" of the Indigenous people.

Megaron's acts against the dam saw him fired as

a co-ordinator with Brazil's Indigenous affairs agency, FUNAI.

Roiti Metuktire, 35, Raoni's grand-nephew, said the nonagenarian chief has come to see Megaron as "a trusted confidant."

Megaron served as his translator on international trips and since the 90s has been seen as the natural choice to "carry Raoni's struggle forward," said Metuktire.

- Poisonous gold -

As women chop up a fresh catch of piranha from the river, Megaron bemoans constant incursions by illegal gold miners into Indigenous territory, whose mercury poisons such waters that sustain villages.

A boom in gold prices due to global instability has ramped up the pressure once again.

"The government has failed to take decisive action to permanently expel them and put an end to mining within Indigenous territories," he said.

Megaron and two other Indigenous leaders are travelling to four European capitals between June 6 and 19, and plan to knock on the door of top jewellery brands like Cartier and Bulgari to urge them to put more pressure on suppliers to ensure their gold does not come from Indigenous land.

- 'Deeply apprehensive' -

Megaron told AFP he was concerned about Brazil's presidential election in October.

Seeking a fourth term, Lula's main rival is Flavio Bolsonaro, son of former president Jair Bolsonaro, who oversaw a dramatic increase in illegal gold mining and deforestation in the Amazon.

While Indigenous communities have expressed frustration with Lula's government, he is credited with demarcating 20 new territories since 2023 and cracking down on illegal gold miners.

"It worries us because the political right is anti-Indigenous. We are deeply apprehensive about what might happen if they win," said Megaron. □



In this handout image taken and released by La Moncloa (Spanish Presidency) on January 31, 2020 a police officer checks passports of the Spanish nationals and others evacuated from the Chinese city of Wuhan, amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, after landing at the Torrejon-Madrid joint civil-military airport in Torrejon de Ardoz.

Spain gave 300,000 passports in 2025

Madrid, Spain

Nearly 300,000 foreigners obtained Spanish nationality in 2025, the highest figure since official statistics began more than a decade ago, authorities said Thursday. In contrast to much of Europe, Spain has adopted a comparatively welcoming approach to migrants, arguing people are needed to offset an ageing population and labour shortages. A total of 299,732 people were granted Spanish citizenship last year, up 19 percent from 2024 and the highest yearly amount since records began in 2013, the National Statistics Institute (INE) said in a statement.

The largest groups of new citizens were from Morocco, followed by Colombia,

Venezuela and Honduras.

Nine of the 10 most represented nationalities were from Latin America, reflecting longstanding legal provisions that make it easier for citizens of many former Spanish colonies to acquire nationality.

Latin American nationals can apply for Spanish citizenship after two years of legal residence, compared with the standard requirement of 10 years for most other foreigners.

Prime Minister Pedor Sanchez's Socialist-led government in January unveiled a plan to give residency and work permits to around 500,000 undocumented migrants. □

Best spots to view the sunset

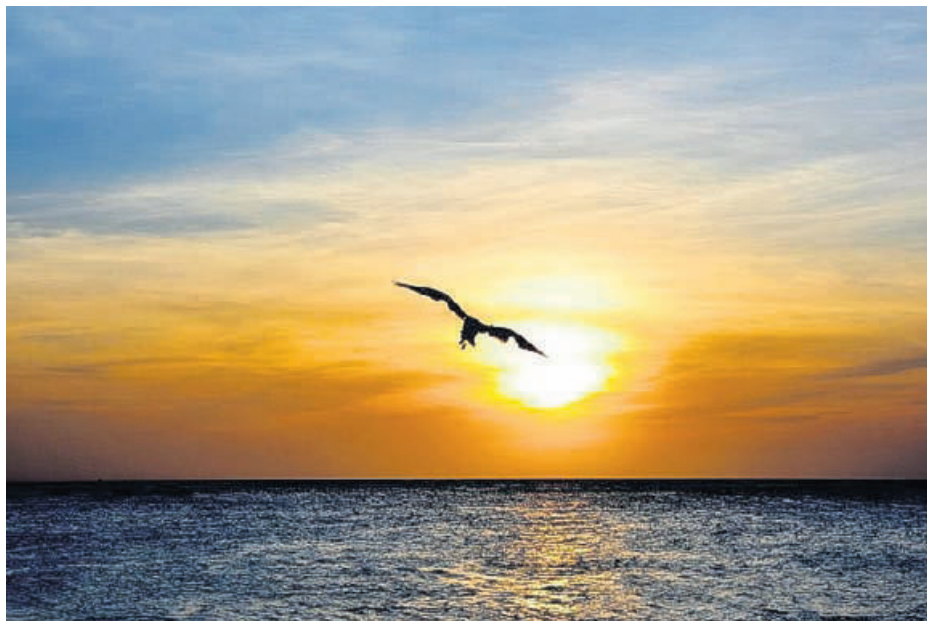
(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset? Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest points easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle



Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described

as an experience!

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California

Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.hue.□

Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

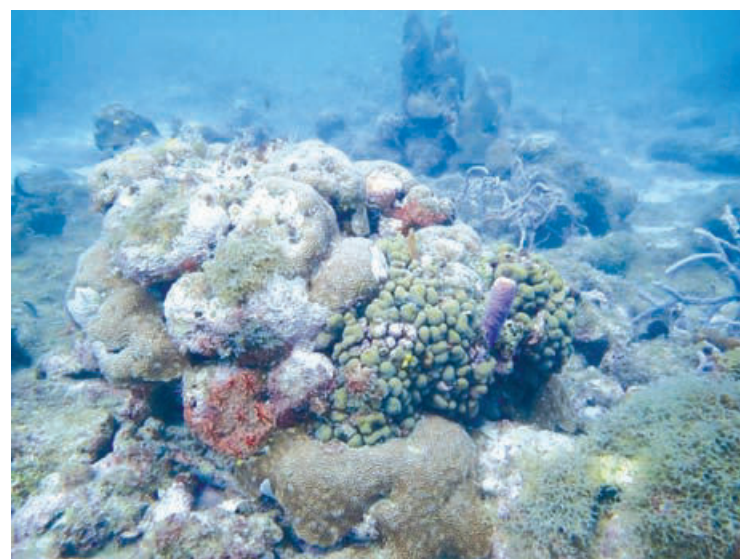
On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio

Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and

land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times on the northern part of the island hold such rich history,



history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserve our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the is-

land, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen!□



Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost Aruban fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel



This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year- round.

Kenepa

Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often

used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system.

Concomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Concomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help



ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year- round.

Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pampuna



In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruba is Sopi di Pompuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □

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The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they



found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who

then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found. At the same time, the Aruban government took

immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa

What Aruba means to the Hollebs!

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Ted and Elizabeth Holleb from Gurnee, Illinois

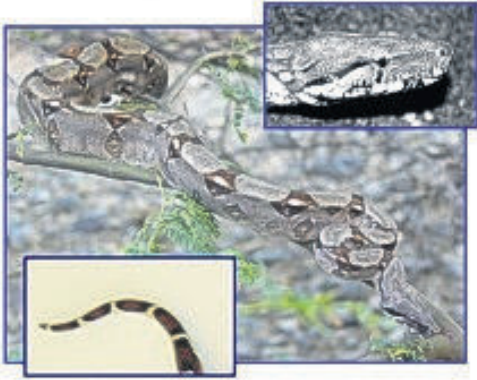
They wrote to us saying: "We were married on the beach here 20 years ago. Fell in love with the people and everything Aruba offers! We are here every year to celebrate our wedding anniversary. It is our Happy Place!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



Snakes of Aruba

BOA
(*Boa constrictor*)



CASCABEL
(*Crotalus unicolor*)



SANTANERO
(*Leptodeira bakeri*)



Arikok National Park is home to various unique plant and animal species such as Aruba's rare endemic rattlesnake (*Crotalus unicolor*). This rattlesnake is locally known as the 'Cascabel'. But Aruba has two more snake species living on the island: the Santanero and the Boa.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. It is best to leave this snake alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it.



Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattlesnakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol.

Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.

Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. This snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans. However, the venom can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not harm this species.

Boa (*Boa constrictor*)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. Newborn Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous. The most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly is white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly. Boas are a non-native species. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. □

Know more about the Town Hall Eloy Arends building

The Monuments bureau shares some essential facts about the Town Hall known as the Eloy Arends building. The aim is to educate the community about the mansion's construction, history, and preservation.

The Doctor Eloy Arends building is located at the Wilhelminastraat 8 and was the home of the Arends family. It was the first building that the Monuments bureau, and the Government of Aruba, restored in 1997. Mr. Medardo 'Dada' Picus, was the architect of this Aruban-Caribbean building. The building sits on a 1.545 m² plot of land and is a typical Aruban mansion. It is an open home with false walls that allow the connection of the rooms with each other.

The entrance has large doors and columns supporting the floor of the upper balcony. In between the columns, there are decoration details made out of wood. The elaborately detailed embellish-



ment is known as gingerbread trim and the triangular decorative wall surface over the columns is called the tympanum.

The top of the doors and windows have stained glass.

The building is not built on

ground level but at approximately 1.5 meters above ground level. This mansion elevation created storage below the wooden floors and allowed proper ventilation.

The building has lots of windows which allow plenty of light inside, as well as good

ventilation.

It has dormer windows and crowns on the outside part of the roof and different decorations on the edges of the walls and facade.

This is a stunning building full of beautiful details that resemble its beauty and

transform into a history of love. Aruban tradition for "well-to-do" families dictates that before a man gets married, he has to present his future wife with a newly built and fully furnished house. It was certainly the case with this building.

Due to the engagement between Eloy Arends and Monica Lacle (daughter of Adriaan Lacle, who is mainly known for the boulevard that bears his name), the construction of the mansion began in 1922 and was completed in 1925 when the couple got married.

The Office of the Civil Registry is located in the adjacent building, whereas the mansion hall is used exclusively for civil wedding ceremonies.

The Monuments bureau will continue to contribute and educate the community about the history of our monuments with significant value for Aruba. □

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)— Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Sweet potato



According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with

hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting,



otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

CROSSWORD

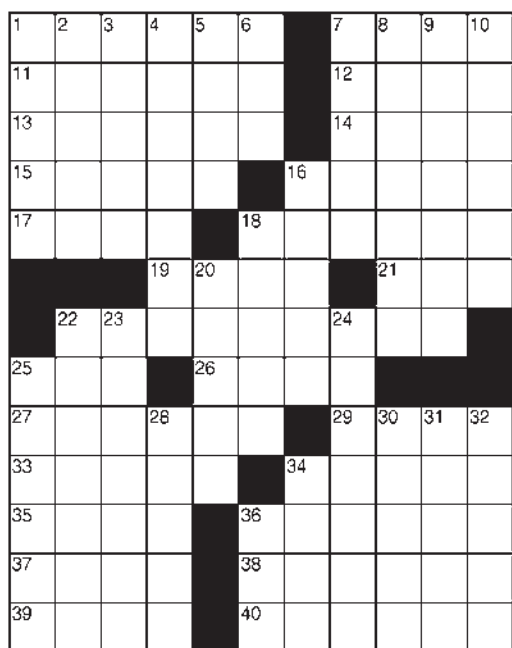
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Holt of NBC News
7 Reached base, in a way
11 Statue setting
12 Big book
13 Tied fast
14 Memo letters
15 Kitchen wear
16 Muralist Rivera
17 Spotted
18 Past and present
19 Bible pronoun
21 Wrath
22 Missouri River port
25 Outlaw
26 Bearing
27 Warring woman
29 Spanish hors d'oeuvre
33 Ancient Mesopotamian region
34 Shade
35 Crocus cousin
36 Old string player
37 Play group

DOWN

- 38 Lets up
39 Plops down
40 Tune
1 Eastern monks
2 Skip the ceremony
3 Point count
4 Raptors' home
5 Tied up
6 Wine choice
7 Laundry problem
8 Wigs out
9 Mental visions
10 Oust from power



1-28

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-28 CRYPTOQUOTE

K H ' C G N H H N X H A C N N

C A F N H J K L D A L R N H J B L H A

J N B X B G A M H K H B H J A M C B L V

H K F N C. — B C K B L T X A P N X G
Cryptoquote: GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD BOOKS AND A SLEEPY CONSCIENCE: THIS IS THE IDEAL LIFE. — MARK TWAIN

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the



store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

JUNE CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
02 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
09 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
16 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C SEVEN SEAS MARINER Arrival: 10:00 Departure: 21:00 Berth: I
17 WED	CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
23 THU	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
30 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

9				4			8	
		5					2	
7			9	5		4		
			3			7		6
					4	5	1	
2				1			3	
		9				2	5	
1			2		8	6		
3			6					

Difficulty: ★★★★★

5/29

Answer to previous puzzle

7	9	2	6	5	4	1	3	8
6	4	8	1	3	2	9	5	7
5	3	1	7	9	8	6	2	4
9	7	4	2	8	3	5	6	1
8	5	6	9	7	1	2	4	3
1	2	3	5	4	6	7	8	9
4	6	5	8	1	7	3	9	2
3	1	9	4	2	5	8	7	6
2	8	7	3	6	9	4	1	5

Difficulty: ★★★

5/28

Mosquitoes can learn to love common repellent, scientists find

Paris, France

Mosquitoes can learn to associate the smell of the world's most common insect repellent with a tasty meal and after training can even prefer to bite people who have been sprayed with it, an experimental study said Thursday.

The surprising results, which were conducted "under very specific conditions" in the lab, do not "call into question the effectiveness" of the repellent DEET, lead study author Claudio Lazzari told AFP.

Since being developed in the 1940s in the United States, the chemical compound has saved many lives from the scourge of insect bites.

"It is the absolute gold standard for repellents, used by the World Health Organization to combat the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases," emphasised Lazzari, professor emeritus at the Insect Biology Research Institute at France's University of Tours.

However the world also needs to find new, more effective, environmentally friendly repellents that cause fewer allergies, he added.

That means figuring out exactly why insects are so turned off by the repellents that we do have.

"We don't know why" compounds like DEET deter mosquitoes, Lazzari admitted. Are they toxic for the little blood-suckers? Do they stop mosquitoes from tracking down our scent? Or do they just smell bad? To find out more, the international team of scientists used a form of conditioning made famous by Pavlov's dog, which learned to associate the arrival of food with the sound of a ball.

- 'Paradigm shift' -

For the experiment, the mosquitoes were put in a fabric mesh enclosure, then presented with a bag of warm sheep's blood to observe how eagerly they fed on it.

Unsurprisingly, the Aedes



Aedes aegypti mosquitos are kept in cages for reserachers to collect their eggs, at a laboratory of biotech company Wolbito do Brasil, in Curitiba, Parana state, Brazil on March 19, 2026.

aegypti mosquitoes which spread deadly diseases such as dengue fever, Zika, yellow fever, and chikungunya leapt at the chance.

When the smell of DEET was introduced, the mosquitoes moved away, which was also expected.

Next, the scientists fed the insects warm blood for 20 seconds, releasing DEET during the last 10 seconds. That part was repeated three times before the mosquitoes were exposed to solely the scent of the repellent.

This time, more than 60 percent of the insects tried to

bite the fabric even though there was no blood.

Then, one of the scientists offered up their hands one clean, the other coated with DEET -- to the trained mosquitoes to see which one they would bite.

The result was beyond doubt: the insects preferred the hand covered in repellent.

The scientists had similar results when they repeated the experiment using sugar instead of blood, because mosquitoes mostly feed on plant nectar in the wild.

"The common assumption has always been that re-

pellents work because of their chemistry," study co-author Clement Vinauger of Virginia Tech in the United States said in a statement.□



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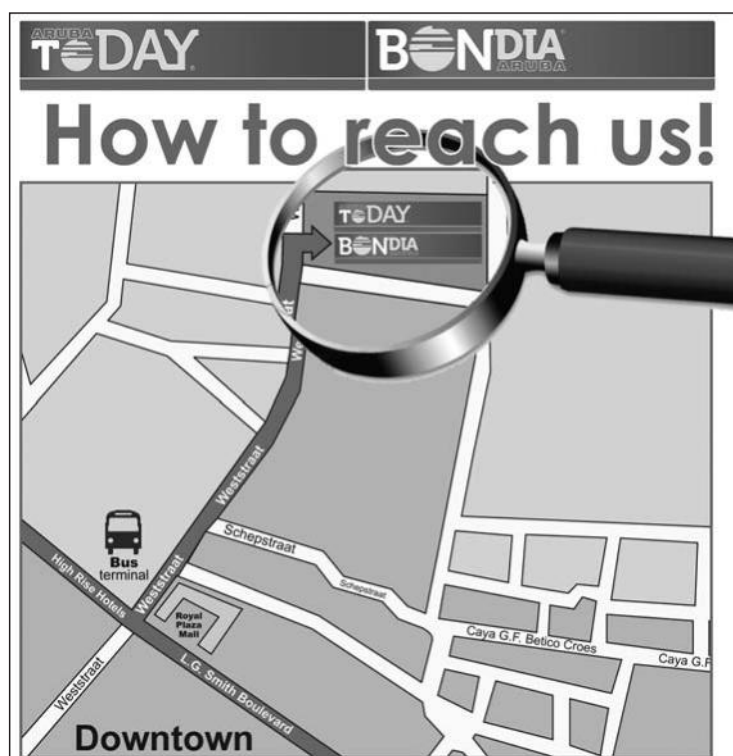
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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

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Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
Police San Nicolas 584 5000
Police Tipline 11141
Ambulance 911
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Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Online horror phenomenon turns movie blockbuster with 'Backrooms'

Paris, France

Originating as a creepy shared story told online by ordinary internet users, the "Backrooms" universe erupts into American cinemas on Friday with a film directed by star YouTuber Kane Parsons.

The work depicts a group of characters who find themselves trapped in a warren of bizarrely laid-out rooms resembling empty offices, illuminated by a pallid yellow light.

Distributed by American production company A24 behind multiple horror hits, including 2019's "Midsommar" "Backrooms" mines the unease generated among users of image board 4chan by a strange photo someone posted in 2019.

"I would have been 13 at the time. I do not recall the first time I saw it exactly, because it was very prevalent as a meme," Parsons told AFP.

He watched as posters' imagination developed the image into a "vaguely nostalgic and vaguely dream-like but also very tangible science-fiction concept". The original image was accompanied by a short piece of anonymous text, warning readers against stumbling into its disturbing



(L/R) Irish-British Finn Bennett, British actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, U.S. director Kane Parsons, Norwegian actress Renate Reinsve, US actress Lukita Maxwell and U.S. filmmaker and actor Mark Duplass attend the LA special screening of "Backrooms" at the Aero Theatre in Santa Monica, California on May 7, 2026.

parallel world.

It quickly became a so-called "creepypasta" a short horror story reposted and modified around the web, to which other users added details such as monsters and undiscovered dimensions.

"This project is obviously bigger than me," feeding on the input of countless other online posters, Parsons acknowledged.

- Viral phenomenon -

It was only in 2024 that on-

line sleuths tracked down the original photo to a 2002 renovation of a furniture store in Wisconsin.

Before that, in 2022, Parsons shared a short film to his YouTube channel that he had made with the 3D software Blender.

It depicted a young boy wandering lost through the Backrooms' terrifying corridors.

Within two weeks, the video had racked up 20 million views.

"I started getting emails from a whole bunch of different companies," Parsons remembers.

"I was 16... it was all very new and I was very sceptical of what it could mean to try and adapt this or to be engaging with suits" from Hollywood, he added especially on "something that I cared so personally about".

Parsons finally reached a deal with two production companies and A24, with filming taking place in sum-

mer 2025.

British actor Chiwetel Ejiofor plays the protagonist in what became Parsons' first full-length director's credit.

"There was no version of this where I wasn't the one directing that I would personally be open to," he said. "I've always been very stingy about that."

On his YouTube channel, Kane Pixels, Parsons today has more than three million subscribers, with more than 215 million views for the 20 or so videos related to "Backrooms" alone.

- Extended universe -

The film is "in direct continuity with the YouTube series", Parsons said.

It alternates between "found footage" segments filmed in first person that resemble his web show, and more classic filmic shots.

"It's going to be weird seeing how much ('Backrooms') has dropped into the mainstream... Formerly this has been semi-niche," he mused.

Parsons's work is not the only internet-spawned universe to hit cinemas this year.

YouTuber Mark Fischbach, whose channel Markplier boasts 38 million subscribers, released the horror movie "Iron Lung" in January. □

Amazon greenlights AI-generated shows for children



(L-R) Peter Friedlander, Head of Global TV, Amazon MGM Studios, Albert Cheng, Head of AI Studios, Amazon MGM Studios, Katherine Pope, President, Sony Pictures Television and Mike Hopkins, Head of Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios, attends Amazon Prime Video's "The Boys" Series Finale Event at The United Theater on Broadway on May 19, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

Los Angeles, United States

Amazon MGM Studios announced Wednesday it has greenlit the first three children's shows that were created under a new initiative to use artificial intelligence (AI) in content development.

The GenAI Creators Fund pays filmmakers, digital creators and startups to use AI to develop their projects in a short time frame.

"Punky Duck" series director Jorge Gutierrez said he is used to spending two years making a pilot, but his new show was greenlit to run on Amazon after just two months.

"The best way I can describe it is, it's like you have sex and then someone hands you the baby," Gutierrez said at the annual AI on the Lot Conference, where the first images of the approved animated series were shown. "It's pretty crazy."

Two more projects "Diana Music Hunters" from Albie Hecht and "Cupcake & Friends" from BuzzFeed Studios were also greenlit in a couple of months, reflecting a new approach from major studios.

Hollywood's unions and artists have raised concerns about the use of AI, with creatives, writers and actors fearing they could be replaced by digital facsimiles.

AI Studios chief at Amazon MGM Albert Cheng told the conference that the technology won't eliminate jobs, it will actually reduce costs and timelines to make it possible to increase the number of productions.

But Cheng acknowledged "AI is addictive," adding that it's important for humans to make sure they don't "succumb and let our brains go to waste." □

Netherlands under the radar as they chase long-awaited World Cup crown

Paris, France

Three-time runners-up the Netherlands head into another World Cup with reasons to be hopeful of a long-awaited first global title, but not among the favourites to lift the trophy. Coach Ronald Koeman returns to the United States, where he captained the Dutch to the 1994 World Cup quarter-finals, with a well-balanced squad despite some injury worries. His team are on a 14-match unbeaten run in all competitions, including all eight of their qualifiers, but are rarely mentioned alongside Spain, France, Argentina and England as leading contenders.

The Netherlands have rediscovered their form at major tournaments after some fallow years following a run to the 2014 World Cup semi-finals.

They suffered a penalty shoot-out loss to eventual winners Argentina in the quarter-finals in Qatar four years ago following a dramatic comeback from two goals down.

Another agonizing defeat followed in the Euro 2024 semis, as Ollie Watkins's injury-time strike snatched England a 2-1 win.

There is quiet confidence back home of a strong performance once more in North America, with former striker Patrick Kluivert saying he expects the Oranje to at



Netherlands' coach Ronald Koeman gestures from the technical area during the friendly international football match between the Netherlands and Ecuador at the PSV Stadium in Eindhoven on March 31, 2026.

least reach the last eight. The Dutch will face Japan, Sweden and Tunisia in Group F as strong favorites to progress.

However, were they to win that group, a tough last-32 tie could follow against the runners-up of Group C which includes Brazil and 2022 semi-finalists Morocco. "With Argentina, Brazil, Spain and France in the mix, the Netherlands are one of the teams to watch out for at the World Cup," Kluivert told Koora.

"I think they could reach the quarter-finals at the very least."

It could be the last chance for some of the Netherlands' star players to shine in a major tournament, with captain Virgil van Dijk to turn 35 during the World Cup and 32-year-old Memphis Depay struggling for full fitness.

But they otherwise boast a largely youthful side.

The injury absences of forward Xavi Simons and midfielder Jerdy Schouten could prove to be a big blow, although Koeman has options to replace them.

Bournemouth's Justin Kluivert is nearing a return to action after injury, while

PSV Eindhoven midfielder Guus Til could also be in contention for at least a place in the squad.

"Xavi's injury was a real blow," Koeman said. "You are watching the match and then you see it happen. And you can tell by Xavi's reaction that it is serious. This is dramatic for us."

- No return for Wijnaldum - Georginio Wijnaldum, though, will not be making a return to the fold despite a strong season in the Saudi Pro League with Al-Ettifaq. "I called him and said that I prefer others," Koeman told broadcaster NOS of the for-

mer Liverpool midfielder. "I haven't selected him since the European Championship, and I have preferred a number of others in his position. And I am very satisfied with that."

The Netherlands proved they can mix it with the best in their Nations League semi-final against European champions Spain last year, when they were edged out on penalties after a 5-5 aggregate draw.

They were rarely challenged in World Cup qualifying, only dropping points in two draws with Poland.

Losing World Cup finalists in 1974, 1978 and 2010, alongside two semi-final appearances, the Dutch are the nation with the best previous performances never to have won the tournament.

They now lack star names of the caliber of Johann Cruyff, Marco van Basten and Arjen Robben, but Koeman has molded a team that is very difficult to beat. The nation's all-time leading scorer with 55 goals, Depay, is set to be a part of the squad even if he fails to regain 100-percent fitness after a recent injury absence.

Koeman has said the Corinthians striker will likely still feature in his plans even if he cannot start their opening game against Japan in Arlington, Texas, on June 14. □

Boston Celtics' Mazzulla named NBA coach of the year

Los Angeles, United States

Boston Celtics head coach Joe Mazzulla was named the NBA's coach of the year on Tuesday after leading the team to a fourth straight 50-win season despite a depleted roster.

Mazzulla, 37, who coached the Celtics to a record 18th NBA championship 2024, is the first Boston coach to earn the accolade since Bill Fitch in 1980.

The Celtics, who were eliminated by Philadelphia in the opening round of the play-offs, entered this season without injured star Jayson Tatum.

But they finished with a 56-26 record to take second place in the Eastern Conference standings.

Mazzulla dedicated the honor to the Celtics' entire backroom staff.

"Thank you to our players who compete and give it everything they have each night," Mazzulla said in a statement.

"I am grateful for every member of the Celtics organization whose dedication impacts winning every day.

"This award belongs to our staff, who are there for the guys every day. Their relentless work ethic improves our team daily. This award should be named Staff of the Year."

Celtics president of basketball operations Brad Stevens paid tribute to Mazzulla's team-building in the absence of Tatum, who only returned to the team in March following an Achilles injury last year.

"With all of our unknowns entering the season, Joe did a fantastic job building and growing a team," Stevens said. □



Head coach Joe Mazzulla of the Boston Celtics looks on during the fourth quarter of a game against the Philadelphia 76ers in Game Seven of the First Round of the NBA Eastern Conference Playoffs at TD Garden on May 02, 2026 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Ailing Sinner crashes out of French Open, Sabalenka through

Paris, France

Jannik Sinner succumbed to illness and a remarkable Juan Manuel Cerundolo comeback to crash out of the French Open on Thursday, blowing the men's tournament wide open, as Aryna Sabalenka safely avoided a similar fate to progress.

Men's world number one Sinner was cruising when leading by two sets and 5-1 in the third set before suddenly struggling with his movement as he lost 18 points in a row.

Sinner took a medical time-out, complained of feeling "dizzy" and left a sweltering Court Philippe Chatrier for treatment, but after returning still slipped to a 3-6, 2-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 second-round loss to world number 56 Cerundolo.

"I struggled, starting to feel very dizzy. Very low of energy. Tried to serve it out, but didn't have a lot of energy," said the Italian. "Woke up this morning, didn't feel very well and tried to keep the points very short."

Sinner suffered his earliest exit from a Grand Slam since the 2023 French Open, as Cerundolo completed one of tennis' biggest shocks in recent years and set up a last-32 tie against Spanish youngster Martin Landaluce on Saturday.



Italy's Jannik Sinner tries to cool down during a break of play in his men's singles match against Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo on day 5 of the French Open tennis tournament on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Complex in Paris on May 28, 2026.

The 24-year-old Sinner was the latest player to wilt under the blazing sun this week, seeing his 30-match winning streak, after taking titles in Rome, Madrid and Monte Carlo, Miami and Indian Wells, come to a shuddering halt.

The Italian will now have to wait until next year, when injured rival Carlos Alcaraz will likely be back in action, for his next chance to complete the career Grand Slam.

The top seed was in total control and romping towards the most routine of

victories before he suddenly started to struggle physically, losing three consecutive games to love.

He asked the chair umpire what his options were when 0-40 down in the next game, before being evaluated by a physio, saying he felt dizzy and needed to vomit.

Sinner gingerly returned to the court after treatment to applause from the crowd but continued to melt in the 32C heat as Cerundolo took the set.

Unheralded Argentinian

Cerundolo appeared inspired by the unexpected opportunity and raced to victory against his deflated opponent, who was left bent over double after every lengthy rally.

"I was little bit lucky, I feel sorry for him," said Cerundolo, whose older brother Francisco also booked a last-32 spot shortly afterwards.

French 17-year-old Moise Kouame became the youngest man to reach the third round at a major since Rafael Nadal at Wimble-

don 23 years ago. The wildcard delighted a raucous crowd with a dramatic 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 2-6, 7-6 (10/8) over Paraguay's Adolfo Daniel Vallejo after four hours and 56 minutes on Court Suzanne Lenglen. "Frankly, without you, I would never have won this match, never," Kouame told the crowd.

Canadian fourth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime reached the third round for only the second time in his last eight Grand Slam events, beating Roman Andres Burruchaga in four sets.

Sabalenka, Gauff through

Women's world number one Sabalenka ground down a battling Elsa Jacquemot to win 7-5, 6-2.

The 67th-ranked home hope Jacquemot pushed Sabalenka for long periods on Chatrier but ultimately could not live with the Belarusian's power.

Sabalenka, chasing a fifth Grand Slam title and first at Roland Garros, will next take on Daria Kasatkina.

Reigning champion Coco Gauff also booked her place in the last 32, seeing off Egyptian qualifier Mayar Sherif 6-3, 6-2.

The American, who could face Sabalenka in the semis in a rematch of last year's final, got the better of a scrappy match featuring 11 breaks of serve. □

France's Magnier sprints to Giro 18th stage win, Vingegaard in pink

Pieve di Soligo, Italy

A shocked Paul Magnier won the 18th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Thursday after a bunch sprint, as Jonas Vingegaard held the overall leader's pink jersey. France's Magnier surged to the line in Pieve di Soligo ahead of Italian pair Edoardo Zambanini and Jonathan Milan to reclaim the points jersey from Jhonatan Narvaez.

It was a third stage win of this year's Giro for Magnier, who rides for Soudal-Quick-Step, and his first since the race left Bulgaria following stage three. But he had not planned on

being in the sprint finish given the stage had a lumpy,

punchy end. Before the stage started,



Soudal Quick-Step French rider Paul Magnier celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the 18th stage of the Giro d'Italia 2026 - Tour of Italy cycling race between Fai della Paganella and Pieve di Soligo, Italy, on May 28, 2026.

he had said he expected to be bringing up the rear. "I really didn't expect to win today, which makes the victory all the sweeter," said the 22-year-old.

"I had no confidence in myself this morning. I even gave up on the first climb.

"I expected to spend a long day in the grupetto but my teammates got around me and Jasper (Stuyven) did an amazing lead out (for the sprint finish)."

Vingegaard continued his push for a first Giro title in an undulating stage which ended with a sprint after a series of attacks in the hilly

final kilometres.

The Dane stays four minutes and three seconds ahead of closest rival Felix Gall.

On Friday, Vingegaard can take a decisive step towards victory in the toughest stage yet of this year's edition, the first of two punishing mountain stages before Sunday's procession finale in Rome.

The peloton will reach the highest peak of the race at Passo Giau on their way to a summit finish at Alpeghe after 151km of riding in the Dolomites which will feature six categorised climbs. □